

Aide-Memoire for Nedzi Concerning
the McCoy Allegations

1. Survival. This Agency, no different than other Federal Government agencies, is not guaranteed survival merely because it may be performing an important function. Its survival is also dependent upon the support of the public and the Congress. It is believed that the domestic heroin problem is of such magnitude and so grievous that belief of Agency involvement could create an atmosphere which would significantly erode such support and make it difficult for those who do support the Agency to withstand onslaughts which may impair our ability to accomplish our tasks.

2. Other Problems. The cumulative effect of allegations by seemingly responsible spokesmen that the Agency is involved in illicit drug traffic or suggestions that, for pragmatic reasons, the Agency is avoiding or subordinating its responsibilities in support of U.S. Government efforts for stopping illicit traffic, also tends to:

a. Erode credibility in the overall U.S. Government effort against illicit drug traffic.

b. Hamper the effectiveness of the Government-wide program.

c. Impair the morale of Agency employees and their families.

d. Tarnish the image of the Agency with the bright young people whom we need to attract as employees.

3. Dimensions of Problem. The Agency, its employees, and its supporters have been conditioned to face allegations, even of out right venality, with a firm upper lip and silence. In the face of a constant barrage of specious allegations and speculations we have generally maintained a no comment posture in the belief that such a posture serves to facilitate the fulfillment of the responsibilities that have been assigned to us by the Congress and the Executive Branch. But the charges of drug involvement, related as they are to a critical national domestic problem, cannot go unanswered or unchallenged without the risk of serious repercussions and ramifications mentioned previously.

4. Agency Action. The Agency's basic concern with the McCoy allegations are, therefore, that they perpetuate the myths:

a. At the most, that CIA is involved in illicit drug traffic, and

b. At the least, that CIA looks the other way because of pragmatic considerations.

Our efforts in connection with these allegations, within the constraints of security and the other sensitivities involved, have been limited to an attempt to provide information so that those who have a responsibility to do so have a basis upon which to reach an informed judgment.

... About this and the information which does just that.

5. Aspin Letter. On 27 June 1972, on the floor of the House, Representative Les Aspin referred to certain recent allegations by Mr. Alfred McCoy. At that time, Representative Aspin announced he was writing the Director asking for a thorough investigation of Mr. McCoy's allegations. Copies of Representative Aspin's letter to the Director and the Director's interim response of 28 June 1972 to him are provided.

6. We have investigated the charges, as we have investigated all such allegations, and have found no credible evidence to support them. Enclosed is a copy of my letter to Representative Aspin advising him of the results of our investigation. As Chairman of the Special Subcommittee on Intelligence of the House Armed Services Committee, we would be pleased to have you review a classified summary of our investigation.

DRAFT - 5 Sept. 1972

The Honorable Lucien Nedzi, Chairman
Special Subcommittee on Intelligence
House Armed Services Committee
Washington, D. C. 20515

My dear Mr. Chairman:

A number of allegations have been made over the past year that the Central Intelligence Agency has been involved in illicit drug traffic in Southeast Asia. As you well know, this Agency normally refrains from publicly commenting upon speculations or allegations concerning its activities.

In the face of charges that the Agency is involved in illicit drug traffic, we have departed from this policy in the belief that the cumulative effect of such unchallenged allegations might hamper Governmental effectiveness in solving the grievous domestic drug problem. Despite our efforts to demonstrate that these charges are unfounded, some of the allegations have continued to be aired, even though the fact is that the Central Intelligence Agency is heavily involved in efforts against the illicit drug traffic.

On 27 June 1972 on the floor of the House, Representative Les Aspin referred to certain recent allegations by Mr. Alfred McCoy. At that time, Representative Aspin announced he was writing to me asking for a thorough

investigation of Mr. McCoy's allegations. Copies of Representative Aspin's letter to me and my interim response of 28 June 1972 to him are enclosed.

We have investigated the charges, as we have investigated all such allegations, and have found no credible evidence to support them. Enclosed is a copy of my letter to Representative Aspin advising him of the results of our investigation. Under separate cover I am forwarding to you, as Chairman of the Special Subcommittee on Intelligence of the House Armed Services Committee, a classified summary of our investigation.

I assure you that this Agency remains fully committed to rendering all possible support to the efforts of the United States Government to suppress and eradicate illicit drug traffic.

Respectfully,

Richard Helms
Director

Enclosures